Panchayati Raj

JULY 1961

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PANCHAYATI RAJ

(Incorporating Gram Sevak)

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PAYMENT TO CONTRIBUTORS

To encourage readers of Panchayati Raj to share with their friends their thoughts, experiences and achievements in the field of Community Development. Co-operatives and Panchayats, it has been decided to pay for letters and contributions appearing in this journal with effect from March, 1961. The payment will be made at the rate of Rs. 5 for each letter and about Rs. 10 for each accepted article. Readers are requested to write articles and letters on subjects of common interest and to address them to :

The Editor, Panchayati Raj,
Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation,
371, Krishi Bhavan,
New Delhi.

COOPERATION AND PAST TRADITIONS

Sir,

I READ WITH interest the letter captioned "Cooperation from Top" of Shri G. Krishna Rao in the March issue of Panchayati Raj.

Cooperation is indeed such a cow that the more it is milked the more it yields. Hence there is no harm if cooperation is imbibed by top leaders, Government servants and the "educated classes of the urban areas", but there is no sense in the rural people waiting for guidance from the top.

The trouble lies not so much in the fact that the rural folk have no good examples at the top to emulate but that the principles of cooperation are not brought home to them on right tracks.

When the great leaders of the cooperative movement talk about cooperation they have in mind its origin in Germany, its growth in Denmark and practicability in China. When with this background they try to impress upon the rural people, they fail and the village folk do not understand them. A stable edifice can stand only on sound foundations. To expect the cooperative movement fed on foreign material to catch on without being based on indigenous foundations, is to misunderstand the whole thing.

What are those foundations? These can be traced in our historical past.

The students of Sociology know well how before the advent of the Britishers, our village communities were based on principles of cooperation. The present cooperative movement should therefore, be geared to those ancient values. The movement if spread in the indigenous style, will be immediately appreciated by the rural folk and acted upon in the right spirit.

29-4-61 Yours etc.

Narendra Sahai Saxena

Sangod, *Tehsildar.*

Kotah Distt.

Rajasthan.

* * *

VLW SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME

Sir,

Ample scope is provided to all other Service personnel except the unfortunate Gram Sevaks for getting higher promotions during their service career. Though eight years are already over since the inception of the Community Development scheme, yet very few Gram Sevaks have been promoted to higher posts. Therefore, the caption "Higher training for Gram Sevaks" published in Panchayati Raj was read carefully and the spirit it upholds has gone into the very recesses of my heart. It has given us a sense of relief that at least now some deserving Gram Sevaks will be able to attain their long cherished goal. But on enquiry we find that no such information has so far been received here.

Therefore, I request you to please make the terms and conditions of this training scheme clear in the next issue of the Panchayati Raj. I am sure this will prove of immense benefit to many others like me.

25-3-1961 Yours etc.

Thrivikraman Pillai

Palluruthy. *Gram Sevak*

(Details of V. L. W. Scholarship scheme have been given elsewhere under 'News from Centre'.—Ed.)

* * *

PANCHAYATI RAJ OR RURAL DEMOCRACY?

Sir,

Prime Minister Nehru has recently expressed his disapproval of the epithet "Democratic decentralisation" commonly applied to the novel experiment of rural development through both elected and official agencies at the village, Block and District levels, now being conducted in Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Mysore, Assam, Punjab and other regions in India. His objection was chiefly aesthetic; but he might well have objected to it on other grounds as well. For the ungainly expression is too vague and indicates neither the content nor the spirit of the new reform. The significantly rural character of experiment is nowhere emphasised and the word "Decentralisation" is not explicit enough. "Decentralisation" of what? Power? Responsibility? Further, is not democracy every where basically a "Decentralised" system? Does one have a "centralised" pattern which can be truly called a democracy? The appellation, "Democratic Decentralisation", first popularised by the Balwant Rai Mehta report in 1957, should, therefore, be replaced by a more expressive one that highlights clearly the significant nature of the new pattern of local self-Government. It is indeed surprising that in a movement that has already collected a considerable literature around it, there has been no serious attempt made to give it a better label that helps to fix in the popular mind a clearer perception of the experiment.

The Prime Minister has expressed his own preference for the Indian term "Panchayati Raj", certainly a more dignified and colourful phrase. But even this expression does not define clearly the nature of the new pattern of administration. The rural bias of the experiment is indicated by the word "Panchayati" but it is apt to be misleading because the village panchayats themselves have limited powers in the new set-up and may or may not be organically related (as in the case of Mysore) to the Samithis at the block level and Zilla Parishads. The word "Raj" is somewhat of a misnomer —and is positively against the "democratic" spirit of the experiment. It has also led in some quarters to the expectation that the new institutions are semi-sovereign bodies, while, in practice, they are subject to both official and non-official checks at all levels. "Panchayati Raj"—if translated broadly as 'Rule of the People' is too wide a term to describe the experiment with any precision; our entire constitution itself may well be described as one "Panchayati Raj".

If "Panchayati Raj" is basically, an attempt to undertake rural development (urban areas are specifically excluded from the operation of this experiment) through the traditional democratic processes of election, discussion and action, a more preferable designation for the experiment would be "Rural Democracy". This has the merit of simplicity; it is besides an accurate description of the two important facets of the scheme: (i) its scope, which is primarily the development of the rural areas of the country and (ii) its technique, which is the democratic method, through the elected representatives of the people. It makes no undue claims for the sovereignty of these bodies: it underlines the basic fact that the experiment merely seeks to bring the hither-to untapped energies of the people living in the village, through a closer and more active participation in the Community Development programme, initiated more than 8 years ago.

Yours etc.

27-12-1960 *Ram K. Vepa, IAS*
Madanapalle, *Sub-Collector.*

(We are inclined to believe that under the new pattern as much of sovereignty is sought to be passed on to the lower units as possible. In fact, the ideal suggested is that higher units should attempt to do only what cannot possibly be done by the lower units. Thus a body at each tier is expected to be sovereign in its own place and yet they all form part of one organic whole—from Gram Sabha to Lok Sabha. What word signifies precisely and comprehensively these two aspects of the movement? Our readers are requested to send us their views on the subject.—Ed.)

Democratic Decentralisation In Rajasthan

Mukut Bihari Lal, M.P.

Below we give a summary of the important issues brought out by the author in a comprehensive study of the Panchayati Raj in Rajasthan. We hope this will be found useful by all those interested in the success of Panchayati Raj—Ed.

DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALISATION deserves to be welcomed, necessary as it is both for democracy and development. Rajasthan scheme is basically democratic at village and block levels and has sufficient potentiality to advance democracy and development.

It is too early to have a proper assessment of its achievements. The start, however, does not seem to be discouraging. Cautious optimism seems to be justified. According to a District Collector, out of 17 blocks in his district, eight were being better managed by Panchayat Samitis, while there was definite deterioration in four and stagnation in the other five.

The success of democracy ultimately depends on the quality of people's participation. In them social awareness, democratic spirit and sense of responsibility are to be generated. Greater attention than has so far been paid is, therefore, needed to promote social education in democratic citizenship. And to sustain people's living interest in development projects it is also necessary that panchayats be required to hold regular meetings of all adults of their circles as laid down in the Act and the people are given an opportunity to review affairs of the village Panchayat and exert their impact on its decisions and activities.

PANCHAYAT SAMITIS

It will be advisable to include in Panchayat Samitis certain persons who are directly elected by the people and are not directly responsible for the planning and execution at the village level. The system of cooperation of the '*Krishinipun*' and of "men of experience in administration and public life and rural development" should be discontinued. District level officers should attend meetings of the Panchayat Samiti and its Standing Committees when they are required to do so.

To ensure fair representation on Standing Committees, it is necessary that its members are elected by Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishad according to the system of proportional representation.

ZILA PARISHAD

The Zila Parishad, as it stands, hardly deserves to be recognised as the third tier of Gram Rajya. Its constitution requires to be considerably revised to enable it to function as such. The District Collector may continue to exercise duties and powers under Articles 66 and 69, but must cease to function as District Development Officer and to exercise powers under articles 42, 53 and 59. He may under Article 69 be empowered to ensure harmony among development departments of the State at district level and render general advice to local self-governing bodies if and when he deems fit. But the District Collector's power to inspect property, institutions and records of the Panchayat Samiti need not be as wide as provided in Article 68. It may be permitted only to the extent necessary to enable him and the State Government to discharge their duties concerning external control. The post of the Secretary of the Zila Parishad should be upgraded and entrusted with executive functions and he should not be required to function as an assistant to the District Collector.

Members of the Parliament and Legislative Assembly should cease to function as members of the Zila Parishad and should be debarred from being its Pramukh. Certain persons directly elected by the people should also be added to the Zila Parishad. The district level officers should attend and take part

(Continued on page 7)

Panches—The Old and The New

R. S. Mann

Opinion has been divided as to what constitutes the best and most effective form of a Panchayat. At present the Panchayats are based on the party system of democracy which has already found acceptance at the State and national levels. But doubts are expressed if this method would prove a complete success particularly in view of the absence of a strong and elaborate Parliament in the form of Gram Sabha. Besides, it has all the potentialities of promoting groupism and factionalism which are already a bane of the village life. That is why wise men like Acharya Vinoba Bhave and Shri Jai Parkash Narayan have already drawn the nation's attention towards the necessity of rethinking on the subject and having unanimous or near unanimous elections. The traditional village leaders of the Community were not elected in a formal way, yet they did exist and function in a very effective and convincing manner. Experience has shown that by and large the newly elected leaders of the Panchayats are young and imbued with a desire to serve the people. The traditional leaders have in them nobility and ripe wisdom. A working cooperation between the two would be the ideal solution during the transitional stage when the very values of community leadership are undergoing transformation. The rural people known for their strong common sense are already working out such a relationship between the old and the new Panches as brought out in this article.—Ed.

PANCHAYATS ARE as old as Indian Polity. We find them mentioned in the Vedas, the Shrutis, Smritis and the epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. In Kautalya's Arthshastra is given an elaborate account of the constitution and working of a village republic. The traditional village Panchayats were attended by men of all castes, when needed. These had no electioneering base. The panches were generally elderly people above forty years of age. They were ripe in wisdom and experience and commanded immediate respect of the village community as a whole.

NEW PANCHES

The members of the newly formed Panchayats are elected and are usually young people fired with a spirit to serve the community. The sphere of duties of the new Panchayats is wider and more comprehensive than that of the traditional Panchayats. The rights and privileges of the new Panches are more well-defined and imposing. Besides administering justice, they look after civic and developmental needs. They distribute loans, manage educational and recreational activities and are responsible for health and sanitation. The 'Gram' or 'Nyaya' Panchayats recently set up under the Panchayati Raj Acts in different States have their own rules and regulations for carrying out their normal work. The newly elected Panches would be within their rights if relying on the laid-down rules, they tried to administer justice or carry out developmental work by themselves unhindered by any outsider. Yet, of their own accord, they have not generally acted in an exclusive or isolationist manner. They have encouraged the association of the traditional leaders and taken decision on all important matters in consultation with them.

MIXED COUNCIL

This association of the traditional leaders in an unofficial manner, so to say, by the new Panchayats has proved very useful. It can be claimed that decisions, compromises and compensations as finalised by elected members in collaboration and in consultation with unelected, elderly and wise men, are based on justice and equity. This justice brought about as a result of the collective wisdom of the elected Panches and the unelected elderly men is highly significant since it is accepted as such by the entire community and not just a section of it.

The traditional village leaders of the old type are regarded as wise and mature

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An Agricultural College with a Difference

R. N. Gupta

COLLEGES ARE RUN by the State, by foundations, by charitable trusts or by philanthropic individuals with a big purse. In India, unfortunately, they are also run by communal organisations, religious sects and denominational bodies. Such institutions tend to hamper the growth of that much-needed sense of emotional unity among all classes of people which is so essential for the progress of our nation. Institutions of higher learning, run and financed by whole bodies of ordinary citizens in the villages, are quite rare if not altogether absent. In Ajitmal village, near Etawah, there is, however, an agricultural college which is not only wholly financed by the common man, but has become the symbol of the new awakening in the masses generated by the Community Development Programme undertaken in the area. This institution works in close collaboration with the block staff and it has tried to make the philosophy of community development and practice in improved methods of agriculture, a part of the life of the students under its charge.

The Ajitmal Agricultural College was founded in 1959 on the base of an Intermediate College which existed in the village since the year 1953. The Inter College had, however, no funds or regular income of its own to satisfy the minimum conditions of affiliation with the University. Its management, therefore, approached the Block officials to help it in raising funds. In a bigger meeting attended by the representatives of the people, the College and the Block staff, it was decided to collect foodgrains from the farmers at the time of harvest so that each family could have a feeling of partnership in the great task of building up an institution for the education of its posterity. In two years, about Rs. 20,000 worth of foodgrains was collected. (The process continues still). Every family in the area contributed its share. Some donations were also received in cash and in the form of land for the college. The Block officials placed all their resources at the disposal of the institution. They made it a medium for extension work and, therefore, established in the college campus itself a Veterinary Hospital, Animal Husbandry Centre, Cow Dung Gas Plant and Agricultural Research Station. They also offered to serve as part-time lecturers in the college on an honorary basis.

Utmost economy was exercised in constructing simple class rooms for the College. The High School and Inter students offered Shramdan for the purpose. An old dry tank of Moghul period was renovated to serve as stadium for games. An old Police Station building was taken over to serve as the boys' Hostel. A Farm of about 20 acres, a nursery of 3 acres, a small dairy and an agricultural workshop soon came in their trail. Fifteen quarters for the members of the staff were constructed by raising a loan from the Government.

The Degree College has at present 120 students on its rolls in the B.Sc. (Ag.) classes. These are in addition to about 1,500 other students up to the Intermediate standard. The discipline of the college came in for special commendation by Col. Bhonsle, Director General of the National Discipline Scheme who visited the college sometime ago. All boys in the college wear a simple uniform of white shirt and Khaki half pant. Mass prayers, P.T. and a period for Shramdan each day are other distinguishing features of the college education.

The Ajitmal College is thus an outstanding example of community effort by a people, who, fired with a zeal to provide higher education to their children, have overcome the shortage of money and pooled their meagre resources to build up a big institution. The people in recognition of their gratitude for the whole-hearted services offered to the college by the Block staff have made the B.D.O. the Secretary of the Managing Committee of the College.

Around the States

BIHAR

BIHAR PANCHAYAT BILL FOR JOINT SELECT BODY

The Bihar Parishads and Panchayat Samitis Bill, 1961, has been referred by the Vidhan Sabha to a joint select committee. The official Bill seeks to empower the State Government to replace district boards with zila parishads and create Panchayat Samitis at block level.

* * *

PANCHAYATS TO COLLECT LAND REVENUE

The Bihar Government has decided to use the services of all panchayats eventually for collection of land revenue. Already 2,000 panchayats have been entrusted with this responsibility. District magistrates, have been directed to entrust revenue collection to panchayats as a rule by the end of May this year. In case of any deviation, they have been asked to report why a particular panchayat should not be given the task. For their services, panchayats are to receive commissions ranging from 5 to 10 per cent according to collections ranging from over 50 per cent to 100 per cent. This commission would on an average bring an annual income of Rs. 700 to each panchayat.

* * *

PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS

Forty per cent of the elections in 5,576 panchayats were without any contests and were officially described as "peaceful and harmonious", according to a Bihar Government administration report.

At the beginning of 1960, elections were due in 7,872 villages but because of the magnitude of the task, elections could be held only in 5,576 villages.

The Government holds on an average 3,000 elections annually among the total of 10,761 panchayats in the State. Voting is by secret ballot.

* * *

VILLAGE COURTS

Bihar panchayats have 7,500 village courts with executive and judicial functions. These courts, have been able to dispense justice in a cheap, quick and efficient manner despite limitations and handicaps.

* * *

MADRAS

PROGRESS OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

Under the three-tier scheme of democratic decentralization in Madras, the panchayats were established at the village level while the community development blocks became panchayat unions. These panchayat unions consist of chairmen of the panchayats in the block area. At the top come the district development councils which will act as a co-ordinating body for the whole district. The Panchayati Raj scheme is being implemented in three stages. On September 30 last, the newly constituted panchayats held their first meetings to take over their new responsibilities. On October 2, the first batch of 75 panchayat unions was formed in 75 community development blocks to take over the functions of the old district boards. The second stage in the scheme of introduction of Panchayati Raj in Madras was reached on April 13, the Tamil New Year's day when about 130 panchayat unions were inaugurated in as many community development blocks. The third stage will be completed by October 2, this year by which

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DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALISATION IN RAJASTHAN

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in the deliberation of the Zila Parishad and its Standing Committees, if and when they are required to do so.

The Zila Parishad should be entrusted with certain positive functions. Its role with respect to Panchayat Samitis should be more constructive and definitive than is possible under the present Act. It should cease to be a fifth wheel. It should not be allowed to boss over them or harass them, nor should Panchayat Samitis be converted into its agencies. To ensure that the Zila Parishad is helpful to Panchayat Samitis in a constructive manner, their budgets and Pramukh's inspection reports are to be reviewed by Standing Committees along with the Pradhan. The Zila Parishad may also be empowered to suspend the execution of such items of the budget of Panchayat Samitis as cannot be allowed under law and rules and are consequently illegal and should also be authorised to refer to the State Government for its consideration their irregularities and illegal activities.

VILLAGE PANCHAYATS

Panchayats need to be reinvigorated. And this is not possible so long as they are expected to function mainly as executive agencies of the Panchayat Samitis. They will have to be encouraged to develop initiative of their own and to be afforded facilities to organise their own welfare activities and development projects as autonomous self-governing bodies. It must be remembered that even though they may not be as vital as the Panchayat Samiti at the block level, they constitute an important tier of Gram Rajya and the basic unit of democracy. Some attention has begun to be paid to this matter by responsible officials of the State.

OFFICIALS AND NON-OFFICIALS

Certain adjustments to a new democratic set-up which are required of administrators may be painful to them, used as they are to function independently of people's will under the direction of higher executive authorities. But these adjustments are unavoidable for building up a genuine democratic order and seem to be well planned with due regard to the protection of their interests. Still, constant vigilance on the part of the Government is needed to ensure to public servants security of service, fair treatment and regular payment of their emoluments along with their prescribed periodical increments. To build up morale in public services, it is necessary to protect them from undue interference in the discharge of their administrative duties, from nepotism and servility of elected members and from subservience to political strings of the ruling party of the State. In case of conflicts between the Pradhan and the Vikas Adhikari due to incompatibility of temperament, the latter is to be transferred. In no case a Vikas Adhikari is to be encouraged to slight the authority and dignity of the Pradhan with a view to serving partisan ends of the ruling party or any of its members. His impartiality is to be respected and insisted upon.

To ensure impartial administration of external control, a semi-autonomous Local Self-Government Board be set up at state level.

PANCHES--THE OLD AND THE NEW

(Continued from page 4)

in experience; the newly formed panchayats because of their new foundations and because of the presence of some young elected members are looked upon by some with distrust and suspicion. But as soon as the Panchayat becomes a mixed council with the inclusion of the unelected members, the negative attitude of the villagers vanishes.

In the village there are invariably a few honest and kind persons who are always impartial in their outlook and who do not like contesting elections. The presence of such persons is most welcome and their suggestions are given due consideration

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CHANGING PANORAMA

Sriram: A retired Deputy Collector aged 60 years, now comfortably settled in a village.

Venu: Sarpanch of local Panchayat Board.

Raghu: A co-opted member of the Samithi and President of the Village Co-operative Society.

On the eve of the visit of the Joint Development Commissioner to their village, these three persons meet in the Panchayat ghar. Sriram and J.D.C. were old colleagues.

Scene I

Raghu: Sriramji—It is a pleasure to meet you. How I wish you oblige us with the ripe experience gathered in long years of service. By the by, how do you feel about Panchayati Raj ?

Sriram: Raghu, excuse me. The less I talk the better it is. In one word, I abhor the scheme. Better you don't tickle me. I came here just to pay a courtesy call on an old colleague of mine, who to-day is your J.D.C.

Venu: Please do not start with prejudice. Perhaps you cannot forget the days of your service during the British regime. Anyway let me know your misgivings. I will try to erase your misapprehensions.

Sriram: Venu, I appreciate your inquisitiveness. Straight I ask, "How many of you are mature enough to deliberate and take decision". Faction-ridden Samithis will only try to distribute the spoils to favoured few. As the employees relate their stories of woe to me, I begin to shudder and wonder if these are not the sure portents of the coming deluge.

Raghu: I will answer every one of your fears. Only let us meet more often and discuss matters for mutual education. Your fears are mostly imaginary. Today most of our Samithi members are educated and young. They are not neo-literates as alleged by you. The difficulties of personnel are a myth. Perhaps to-day they receive their salaries more promptly than they ever did in the past. Misuse of vehicles, favouritism here and there are matters of negligible importance which will get corrected with the passage of time.

In the meanwhile, the V.I.P. arrives and they agree to adjourn their meeting to some other suitable time for discussion.

Scene II

A conversation between the B.D.O. and a Tahsildar overheard and reported by our correspondent is reproduced below :—

Tahsildar: Hullo! How do you do ? Of late you are a rare visitor to the club. Enveloped in the midst of *dhotiwallahs,* you have no time to think of us. The new canker of Panchayati Raj is having repercussions even on people like us.

B.D.O.: Surely, effects of decentralisation will spread to every tissue in the administration. In the changed set-up, people have become suddenly conscious of the duties of various officers. Their demands on us have increased greatly. Hence no wonder, one has to be always alert.

Tahsilder: I am not interested in your lecture. I realise, with the advent of Panchayati Raj, several of you have become 'biceros !' Your jeep is always a picture of loaded *dhotiwallahs.* It is a pity, that your diaries and reports are scrutinised by that illiterate president. What a change from the glorious past to the present unfortunate state !

B.D.O.: I thank you for your sympathy. You are lucky. The changed climate has not touched you. Honestly I am counting my days. A

OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

few years ago, a person who dared not even sit before me, today rules over me. My bad time !

In the meanwhile, the officers see the correspondent and change the topic of conversation.

Scene III

A conversation between a B.D.O. and his wife.

Wife : Your behaviour and attitude is much changed these days. The warmth and attachment are now things of the past in the history of our domestic life.

Husband : Darling—I am not changed. Only I am caught in a busy environment. You cannot understand this change easily. I have to spend considerable time mixing with rural folk and taking orders from them. The minimum wants are so great that I find little time even to examine them.

Wife : I don't follow your prattle. Frankly let me tell you, you have today lost status in the society. You are no more recognised as a man that matters; you seem to enjoy your Samithi meetings, staff meetings, Parishad meetings etc. But it is simple nonsense to mix up with that indisciplined rural crowd. You have developed a thick skin and I am told you sign papers with both hands. This disturbs my mental poise. I am afraid even our ancestral property is now in jeopardy. Please hear me. Go to Hyderabad and try for a reversion to your original department. Let us be happy once again.

Husband : I pity you. Your fears are unfounded. Take heart and be happy. Please note that it is given only to very few persons to do service of our people. Change your concepts of status and be gay again.

Scene IV

Village Headman and the Sarpanch are engaged in a conversation.

Sarpanch : Patel Sahib, what happened to your past dignified looks ? Your lace turban, long coat—all are conspicuously absent.

Headman : You have usurped all my privileges. All visiting bosses think no more of me. You are given a seat in all offices and permitted to smoke in their midst. I little expected that in my own life my prominence will go down like this. May Heavens fall !

Sarpanch : I am afraid you have misunderstood the changed circumstances. Please hear me. I am not here to supersede you. We are to complement each other in the object of bettering the role of village folk.

Headman : Please stop this nonsense. Don't tickle me. If times do not change, I will shortly resign my post and contest for Panchayat elections. I must see my prestige is restored in the village. Look ! to-day even the village pedagogue refuses to write me the documents.

Sarpanch : I wish you all good luck. But let me tell you that you will be elevated in the eyes of the newly aroused public only if you strive to serve them earnestly. Good-bye.

P. Balasubrahmanyam

PANCHES—THE OLD AND THE NEW

(Continued from page 7)

leading to unadulterated justice. Another reason for associating the unelected element may be the desire of the 'Pardhan' and others to eliminate the atmosphere of acrimony and retaliation which might have been created as a result of the elections. The consultation with defeated elders ensures harmony and goodwill of everybody. Chances of favouritism are less and the evil effects of groupism, factionalism and casteism cease to dominate. This is how a political system gets intimately related to the social structure. The ideal of 'Sarvodaya' or 'Ram Raj' can be realised only in this way.

Sons of the Soil

THE FARMER WITH A MISSION

R. N. Gupta

SHRI KULSHRESRTHA, the genial Agricultural Engineer in Mahewa Block, drove me 10 miles in the Jeep along a dangerous, uneven and ravinous area to village Dalipnagar in his Block to introduce me to Pt. Anand Madhav Shukla. I was told that Mr. Shukla was an extraordinarily gifted farmer, inspired with a mission. and without meeting whom, my visit to Pilot Development Project, Etawah, would not be complete. We reached his house quite early in the morning, but were informed that the septuagenarian farmer was in his field, irrigating his sugarcane crop. Another mile in Jeep, and we found Pt. Sukla, spade in hand, busy as usual, near his artisan well.

"What is it Pt. Shukla that inspires you to work so hard in the field with your own hands at this advanced age in your life"?, I enquired. I had been informed earlier that Pt. Shukla was a well-to-do farmer belonging to one of the noble families of Lakhna estate.

"Have you not seen already that I live in one of the most backward and inaccessible villages of this State, surrounded by ravines and infested by dacoits. I want to gain control over adverse forces of nature by carrying on experiments in my fields in soil reclamation, lift irrigation, efficient use of animal and mechanical power and crop patterns suitable for this area. In this task I take the help of the numerous experts, —Indian and foreign—who often visit this Block since the time Mr. Albert Mayer put it on the map", replied Pt. Shukla, obviously taking me as yet another agricultural or irrigation expert from Delhi on a fleeting mission of wise counselling.

"I am a development reporter," I explained, and "my object is to find out from you details of some of the interesting experiments you have carried on in agricultural development to serve as a model for the other people in the area."

Pt. Shukla then gave a brief talk about his many experiments and the inspiration behind them. He explained, when he was a young lad of 15, he chanced to see an agricultural exhibition at Allahabad, displaying the models of some of the improved agricultural implements and the better farming techniques followed in other countries. Since then, Pt. Shukla said, it had been a passion with him to try out new and newer experiments in his own fields to improve agricultural production in his area.

Recalling some of the interesting experiences, he said, about 20 years back he tried out experiments at ploughing his fields with he-buffaloes, camels and dry cows. He found that for certain agricultural operations, they proved even better substitutes for bullocks, and hence their use was now quite common for drawing water from wells, threshing operations and transport purposes, etc. In this context, he mentioned that despite popular belief to the contrary, he found the donkey a useful and wise animal for agricultural economy.

Pt. Shukla then narrated to me with a mastery over technical data, that would leave an expert engineer gaping, how he carried out improvements in design of the rural cart so as to lessen

the burden on bullocks, of the iron ploughs and cultivators and of the bullock-driven screw water lift so as to lift water from irrigation channels up to a height of 5 to 6 feet. The last improvement suggested by him has now been adopted on a large scale in the Block as it has succeeded in raising the discharge of water by at least four times at half of the cost.

The most important contribution of Pt. Shukla in raising the level of living of his people is, however, the discovery of artisan wells in the Kachhar area of the Jamuna river. Before Pt. Shukla developed such a well in his own land in village Dalipnagar in 1950, artisan wells were only found in Terai area of Uttar Pradesh. In 1946, Shri Shukla noticed a self-discharge of water in his fields and he immediately set out to develop an artisan well. After a number of initial set-backs, success attended his efforts in 1950, though at considerable cost to himself. This, however, paved the way for the later development of a large number of artisan wells in about 33 villages on both sides of the Jamuna covering a distance of about 40 miles.

An artisan well in this area now costs about Rs. 5,000 (as against the cost of about Rs. 15,000 incurred by Pt. Shukla), and it provides irrigation facilities to about 10 acres of land. Already 23 such wells have been sunk in this area with an irrigation capacity of about 200 acres.

Pt. Shukla has now suggested a scheme to the Block authorities that for the more intensive working of the existing artisan wells round about his village, which at present number 11, and whose number could be easily raised to 50, arrangements might be made for securing hydro-electric power from the nearest power house at a distance of only 15 miles (this according to Pt. Shukla would cost about Rs. 1,20,000) so that the irrigation potential of the wells may be opened up for bumper crops. The return on the money invested in securing electric power would more than pay its way in terms of increased agricultural production and employment to people who now take to criminal activities for want of any economic vocation. The land in the area is quite fertile, and wherever proper irrigation facilities are available, it gives good returns. The production of sugarcane, for example, is about 1,000 maunds per acre as against 400 maunds on average land. Pt. Shukla is confident that sooner than later, his suggestion would be accepted and his dream of transforming one of the so-called dacoit-infested ravine area in his State into a peaceful and progressive agricultural community, would be realised.

Truly, Pt. Shukla is not only an inspired farmer himself, but a leader of men who is a source of inspiration to others, not the least to the Block staff in the area.

AROUND THE STATES

(Continued from page 6)

time it is hoped that panchayat unions in all the 374 development blocks in the State will have been set up.

* * *

PUNJAB

PUNJAB PANCHAYAT ACT ENFORCED

The Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads Act has been enforced in Punjab with immediate effect. The Act provides for the establishment of a new structure for rural administration. Its base will be provided by the recently-elected panchayats. Elections to the Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads will be held within the next three months. The next stage of Panchayati Raj will be the election of the primary members of Panchayat Samitis on July 11, to be followed by the election of members of Zila Parishads and of the chairman and vice-chairman of Panchayat Samitis on August 15. The election of chairman and vice-chairman of the Zila Parishads will be held on September 23. A State-wide Panchayati Raj Sammelan is proposed to be held on October 2.

* * *

COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE

BEST VILLAGE PANCHAYAT

VILLAGE PANCHAYAT Pangari, about 15 miles from Durg in the Gunderdehi Development Block recently got a cash award of Rs. 1,000 for securing the first place in the Raipur Division in the divisional-level competition during the Panchayat Parva, 1960. An outstanding achievement of the village has been the complete eradication of untouchability from the village where all the people live like members of a joint village community.

* * * *

PANCHAYAT SAMITI TO LEVY TAX

The Piprali Panchayat Samiti in Rajasthan has decided to levy tax on most professions, ranging from money-lending to medical practice. Carpenters, confectioners, tailors, goldsmiths, masons and petty traders will all be covered by the levy. Taxes on camel and bullock-carts, motor vehicles, flour mills and liquor shops are also proposed. The public have been invited to send their objections to the proposal within a month.

* * * *

NEW LIFE IN AN ORIYA VILLAGE

Bambillo, an unknown village in a jungle area in Orissa, is now on the map of progressive rural India. It is now a leading village in the State. It has inspired a silent revolution in the countryside ushering in a new era for the people.

The Community Development Programme of aided self-help was a big attraction to the villagers of Bambillo who working ceaselessly over a period of eight years, have changed the face of their village. A narrow and congested village, some eight years ago, today it presents a spectacle of plenty and prosperity. There is a cooperative house-building society, a cooperative farming society and a cooperative store. Streets are broad. The Sabha Ghar in the centre of the village is a common meeting place. There is a common orchard, improved cow-sheds and compost pits on either side of the approach road. The villagers own and run a truck jointly on a cooperative basis. The truck is being run on hire in the nearby mine area.

The entire paddy land in the village is now under improved cultivation. Joint-farming has been adopted in vegetables-growing.

The Mahila Samiti in the village is an active organisation looking after the cultural development of the village. In 1959, the village was adjudged to be the best in the State and a cash prize of Rs. 1,250 was awarded to it.

* * * *

ORAI'S COOPERATIVE VENTURE

Orai district in Uttar Pradesh set on the road to progress under the aegis of the Community Development Programme, has cut new ground in the sphere of economic betterment of the kisans by establishing cooperative marketing societies all over the district. These societies help the cultivator to sell his produce in the open market without the aid of the intermediary.

This intermediary traded in foodgrains at the cost of the poor kisan and earned huge profits by way of commission. Then came the cooperative movement which sounded the death-knell of the middleman's profit with the

opening of cooperative marketing societies. The agriculturist who produced grain by the sweat of his brow is no longer fleeced by the middleman.

Due to these cooperative ventures, the farmer's produce is sold in the open market at immense profit. Twenty such societies were functioning in 1959-60 with share capital totalling Rs. 1,62,262 and working capital of Rs. 6,90,253. These societies earned Rs. 21,911 as profit in 1959-60.

The marketing society of Kalpi is one such hub of the trade. An endless procession of bullock-carts, laden with grain, trundles into the compound of the cooperative marketing society at Kalpi. The trade is brisk and the buyer purchases the commodity without haggling from the society in the presence of the producer.

* * * *

VILLAGE WITH ALL MODERN AMENITIES

Situated eight miles in the interior from Hapur town, Yadpur village is provided with all the modern amenities and is said to be the only one of its kind in India. It has electricity, tap water, wide jeepable roads, irrigation channels, tubewells, a primary school and community listening sets. The village consists of about 400 families.

The latest example of fine voluntary work done with the Government assistance is the construction of a bridge over the Kali Nadi. The State Public Works Department had estimated its cost at Rs. 3 lakhs but the villagers have completed the project in less than half of this cost. About 13,000 persons from 14 villages worked on it for 40 days and constructed along it a one-mile long road. The Government's contribution is only Rs. 35,000. The bridge has linked about 100 villages.

* * * *

GREEN MANURE IN UTTAR PRADESH

Green manure has become very popular among the peasants of Uttar Pradesh. About five years back, green manure was grown only on 6,50,000 acres; but now it is sown in 1,10,00,000 acres. Thus area of green manure has gone up by more than 17 times. It is expected that on account of this, agricultural production will increase by 11,40,000 tons in the Third Plan period. The green manure is as good as nitrogen manure or cow-dung manure in raising the fertility of the soil. Farmers sow the seeds of green manure along the four sides of their fields, and thus obtain locally their requirements of green manure seeds.

* * * *

ROAD BUILT THROUGH SHRAMDAN

Residents of Nathuwala and surrounding villages have completed an eight-mile kacha road in eight days. The road will connect Nathuwala with Mehlawala on the Mudki-Bhagapuran road. Nearly 1,200 villagers had worked on the construction of this road. 300 students who attended the A.C.C. camp in Nathuwala village lent a helping hand to the villagers.

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COW DUNG GAS PLANTS IN PALGHAR BLOCK

The Palghar Development Block in Thana District of Maharashtra State has launched a programme of erecting 22 gas plants, one in each Gram Sevak's circle for demonstration purposes. All the 7 plants installed so far have been functioning satisfactorily. People in the rural areas are very enthusiastic about these plants. More and more families are coming forward to demand the plants.

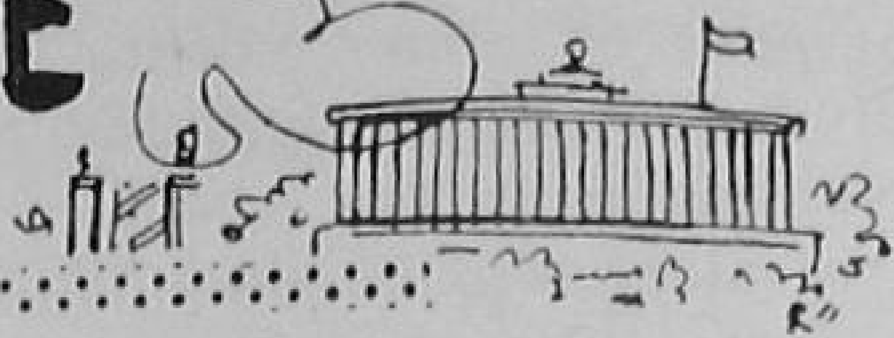
* * * *

MAHEWA FORGES AHEAD WITH IMPROVED IMPLEMENTS

The improved agricultural programme was intensified in the Mahewa Block of the Etawah Pilot Project in 1957. A qualified Agricultural Engineer from Naini was put incharge of the programme. He organised intensive demonstrations of steel ploughs, wah-wah cultivators, olpad threshers, levelling karhas, hand-hoes and seed drills, etc., that were suited to the requirements of the area. All the V.L.Ws. and ground level workers were trained in the proper use of these implements. The manufacture of some of these implements was entrusted to the Cooperative Union, Mahewa which had started a workshop for

(*Continued on page* 15)

FROM THE CENTRE



V.L.Ws. SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME

THE GOVERNMENT of India have sanctioned scheme for the grant of scholarships to selected village level workers to enable them to take up courses of study at the various rural Institutes in the country. The Ministry of Education in consultation with the National Council for Rural Higher Education have since agreed to permit selected VLWs to complete the Diploma course in Rural Institutes in two years, as against the 4-year course prescribed for Matriculates (including one year's preparation course) and 3 years for Intermediates. Since most of the VLWs are Matriculates this amounts to a concession of 2 years to them in completing the Diploma course. The Diploma has already been recognised by almost all State Governments as equivalent to a degree for purposes of employment under Government.

Each student has to study four compulsory and one optional subject. The optional subject has to be selected from amongst the following six subjects: Public Administration, Cooperation, Social Education, Social Welfare; Home Science and Small Scale Industries. The idea is not only to provide general education to the VLWs, but also to enable them to specialize in any one of the above mentioned particular fields.

The Scheme is for an initial period of three years with one hundred scholarships per year. For the present, eighty scholarships will be awarded in Rural Institutes. The remaining twenty scholarships will be available for courses in other institutions. The selecting of the Rural Institutes by the States for the study of their candidates would be based on the considerations of nearness of location and the regional language taught. Some of the details of the scheme are as follows:—

(a) Number of scholarships stipulated for each state are: Andhra Pradesh—7, Assam—2, Bihar — 9, Gujerat — 3, Jammu & Kashmir—2, Kerala—3, Madhya Pradesh—7, Madras—5, Maharashtra—7, Mysore—5, Orissa—4, Punjab—4, Rajasthan—3, Uttar Pradesh—12, West Bengal—5, Union Territories—2.

(b) The State Government shall call for applications from the VLWs and make a preliminary selection of 5 times the number of scholarships allotted to the State. These names will be forwarded to the Rural Institute at which the VLWs are proposed to be deputed. The Director of the Rural Institute together with the Development Commissioner of the State or his representative will conduct a *viva voce* and a written test of 3 hours' duration covering general knowledge with stress on community development and Extension.

(c) The period of each scholarship will be for 2 years. The VLW will, therefore, join the Diploma Course for the second and final years only and will have to make up by private study what is taught in the previous year. The Rural Institutes, of course, will give all assistance and guidance for him to do so.

(d) Only VLWs who have passed at least Matriculation examination and possess a minimum of 5 years' experience in the field are eligible to this scholarship.

(e) After the completion of the course, the VLW will have to take the public examination conducted by the national Council for Rural Higher Education. The Diploma will be awarded to him on passing this examination.

(f) The selected VLWs while under study will be

treated as on study leave from the State Government by relaxation, if necessary, of the provisions of the existing study leave rules of the State Governments. The study leave salary will be paid by the State Governments as usual.

(g) The Scholarship to be given to the selected VLW will be equal to the sum of his basic pay and allowances, at the time of his deputation for the course less the amount of study leave salary admissible plus allowance not exceeding Rs. 50 (Rupees fifty) per month. The expenditure, except the study leave salary, will be met out of the funds to be provided by the Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation.

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

The conference of All-India Voluntary Organisations held recently in New Delhi accepted unanimously the principle that Panchayati Raj institutions should be assisted by voluntary organisations in the implementation of development and training programmes. The conference was convened by the Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation and was attended by representatives of 29 voluntary organisations. It emphasised that voluntary organisations should play an important role in mobilising public opinion and educating the masses and recommended that there should be an agreed programme in which both voluntary organisations and Panchayati Raj institutions should be closely associated.

HONORARIA TO PRADHANS AND PRAMUKHS

The question of allowances or honoraria to the Presidents of Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads is being examined by the Union Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation and proposals in this regard would be discussed at the next conference of State Ministers of Panchayats, scheduled to be held at Hyderabad in July, next.

COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE

(Continued from page 13)

the purpose in 1958. Arrangements for their repairs were made in the villages by starting small smithy units run by blacksmiths specially trained for the job. Arrangements were also made for the supply of credit to cultivators for the purchase of these implements through cooperative stores.

The result of all these efforts has been that the sale of improved agricultural implements has been continuously going up from year to year, reaching near saturation point in the matter of light ploughs, cultivators and threshers. The sale of light ploughs, for example, increased from 52 in 1948-49 to 1,486 in 1959-60, of cultivators from 3 in 1949-50 to 3,279 in 1959-60 and of threshers from 2 in 1949-50 to 154 in 1959-60. Recently attempts have been made to popularise other improved implements as well, for example, Wheel Hoes, Nagpuri Yokes, Care Ploughs, Narrow Patelas, Volta Otto Sets, Disc Cultivators, Sugarcane Ridgers, Automatic Dibblers, etc.

Another outstanding achievement of the rural workshop at Mahewa is the introduction of Cycle Winnowing Fan. It is an attachment of winnowing fan, costing about Rs. 60, to an ordinary cycle. A man sits on the cycle seat as usual and paddles it. The energy so created moves the fan which gives enough wind for winnowing operations in bad weather. The apparatus is most simple, easy to handle and to repair. It can be easily fitted or detached from the cycle with the help of four bolts. It enables the farmer to make an additional use of his cycle for important agricultural operations without involving further investment. Another plan is now under way to enable the use of the cycle for lift irrigation purposes, if possible.

USEFUL TIPS

TOWARDS EVOLVING AN IDEAL JUTE SPECIES

Experiments conducted at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi, bid fair to evolve an ideal variety of jute combining the good qualities of the two species now cultivated in India —*Corchorus olitorius* and *Corchorus capsularis*. The former which grows on high ground, has a wide range of adaptability and is tolerably resistant to diseases and pests. It has a tall, unbranched stem and produces the strong brown Tosse fibre used commercially. Corchorus capsularis is resistant to floods and drought, has a white fibre which is somewhat weak, and is more susceptible to diseases and pests.

COLLECTING SOIL SAMPLE

A large number of farmers are sending samples of soils from their fields to the laboratories for testing. The laboratories require but a pound of the soil sample. Farmers, therefore, should see that the soil they send represents their fields. For this, they should collect the soil from 15 to 20 different spots all over the field. They should first dig an eight to ten-inch deep pit at each spot, scrape the soil from the sides of these pits and then collect it in a cloth or a thick paper bag. They should mix well the soil collected from all the spots, and remove trash from it, if any. They should then spread the soil on the ground in the form of a rectangle and divide it into four quarters. They should collect the soil from opposite quarters and throw away the rest. They should repeat this process till about a pound of soil remains. They should pack this in a cloth or a gunny bag and label it properly before sending it to the laboratory for analysis. Samples collected this way have all the qualities of the soil of the fields from which they have been taken.

COTTON PESTS

A number of pests like the jassids, white flies and boll worms attack the cotton crop and damage it so badly that cotton pickings get smaller and smaller. Spraying the infected crop with a mixture containing 0.1 per cent DDT and 0.1 per cent BHC suspensions (one pound of each of 50 per cent DDT and BHC wettable powder in 50 gallons of water) or 0.02 per cent 'Endrin' emulsion (one pound of 'Endrex'—20 E.C. in 100 gallons of water) at 50 to 100 gallons per acre not only controls the jassid and white fly completely, but also keeps the crop free of leaf-roller and aphis. The spraying also reduces the damage by the boll worm to half.

CHILLI CROP

Regarding planting time, chilli was found to give the best results when planted in the first half of September.

Unlike most other crops, chilli gives higher yields when grown year after year in the same land instead of being rotated with other crops like groundnut, tobacco and jowar.

This has been seen at the Agricultural Research Station at Lam in Guntur District (Andhra Pradesh). Planting seedlings in single, spaced at 5½ inches, in rows 22 inches apart was found to be the best planting method. For getting the best results, seedlings should be transplanted when they are six to eight weeks old.

The use of a seed-rate of 1½ to 2 pounds per cent area of the nursery, not only showed the lowest number of deaths due to 'damping off' disease, but also gave sufficiently large number of sturdy plants needed for planting an acre.

Pashmina shawls of Kashmir are artistic pieces of beauty admired all over the world. Some of the Pashmina artisans have formed themselves into a Co-operative Society to carry on the handicraft efficiently.

"THOU SHALT LIVE BY THE SWEAT OF THY BROW"

The Indian peasant and the landless labourer having the barest of living facilities are a hard working lot engaged in producing bumper crop from mother Earth.

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